from the Author of "Dollface"

Lolligag

R. J. POWELL

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Trigger Warning

This is a book of extreme horror.
Reader discretion is advised.

Lolligag

RJ Powell

Chapter One

"Jesus fucking Christ, Krystal, why can't you just get a God damned job for once! And get off the fucking drugs!"

Lucy sat with her Vienna sausage can in between her legs on the tattered rug, her eyes glued to the television.

"Because, *Jason*, I'm too busy taking care of that fucking brat of yours," she replied.

Lucy felt something small hit the back of her head, but she tried to ignore it. Her favorite Saturday morning cartoon, *Lolligag,* was on.

Jason threw his spiked coffee across the kitchen. "She's your brat, too, you stupid bitch!"

Lucy turned her head to see her parents behind her. She knew when objects started flying, she had to stay quiet. Besides, this was her favorite episode. Lolligag emerged from a teacup like a genie, summoned by the Mayor of Sherbertville, when Dr. Dookan, the mad scientist, sends the town into a topsy-turvy tailspin by making all stray cats caramelized demons. Lolligag must find the missing pieces of her broken lollipop to stop Dr. Dookan. She then grants three wishes to the mayor for his help in solving the crime.

Krystal stormed across the house. "I wanted an abortion, remember!"

"Then stop fucking everything with two legs, you whore!"

Lolligag danced about the screen.

“Says the sex offender!”

“I’ll fucking kill you!”

“Yeah? For fuck’s sake, Jason. We both know you won’t do shit to me.”

Lucy tuned them out and hummed along with the cartoon.

“Yeah?” he replied, mocking his wife. “Fucking slut!”

Lucy could hear muffled cries behind her. Reaching up, she turned the volume dial on the television set. A bunny rabbit named Lollihop bounced across the screen.

“You wanna die today, bitch? Huh?” said Jason, his hands around his wife’s throat.

Krystal fought back, smashing a plate from the kitchen table across his head. Coughing and catching her breath, she finally let out a cry that caught Lucy’s attention. “Fuck you!”

Just as Lucy turned to look at her parents, another plate was launched through the air toward her head by her mother, but Lucy managed to duck in time as it smashed against the television screen, shattering the glass and causing green glitches to appear.

“Mama!” Lucy cried out, tears welling up in her troubled eyes.

“Shut the fuck up!” Both parents yelled in unison.

As her lip began to quiver, she covered her ears and pressed her knees up to her chin. All Lucy ever wanted in the world was for things to be quiet. For Krystal to love her, for Jason to love Krystal, and for her little world to be like the other kids at school. Normacy with Taco Tuesday and game nights and bedtime stories.

She shut her eyes hard and wished with all her might that the chaos would stop.

Suddenly, everything around her turned quiet.

Lucy slowly looked up, and Krystal was frozen mid-run toward her, wielding a butcher knife. Running toward Krystal was a frozen version of Jason, his arms outstretched as if he were trying to stop his wife from doing the unthinkable.

Suddenly, she heard a whisper that sounded like it was cutting through static. “Hey! Little girl!” the voice called out. Lucy looked around the room, but it was as if time itself had stopped.

“Wh—what is that?” Lucy managed to squeak out when a glitch from the television screen caught her eye.

“It’s me!” said the voice once more, coming from the speakers of the old T.V. set.

A pair of absurdly large, pink gloved hands suddenly clawed their way out of the broken screen. They gripped the jagged edges, stretching the glass like taffy. The hands were followed by long, cartoon-like arms that led their way to a pink fluffy dress. Lucy sat in awe as she watched her favorite cartoon seemingly coming to life, rubbing her eyes and blinking rapidly as if she couldn’t believe it.

Suddenly, teal hair came pouring through the cracks in the screen just before her face emerged, wide-eyed and staring directly into Lucy’s gaze.

With a *WHOOP-DEE-DOO* and a metallic *ping*, Lolligag hopped down onto the tattered rug.

She was the size of Lucy, but her presence was immense, casting a sharp, surreal shadow in the dim room.

“Oh, my stars!” Lolligag squeaked. “What a messy show!” Her voice echoed as if coming from the inside of a hollow shell.

“Lolligag?!” whispered Lucy. “H—how?!”

“You called for help, didn’t you, sweet pea? You wished for quiet!” She leaned toward Lucy, her enormous pie-cut eyes full of sympathy.

Lolligag suddenly turned toward the television and reached inside, her tongue sliding against the inside of her cartoon cheek. Her eyes wandered about the room until she revealed the cartoon arm that was holding her special, magical lollipop.

Lucy stood up, her tiny toes digging into the fibers of the rug. “How?” she managed to croak out.

“Magic!” replied Lolligag. “Ya see, I’ve been watching you for some time now.”

“You have?”

Lolligag nodded. “Mhmm! And I know your mother and father are bad people.”

Lucy turned to look at her parents, once more as a sudden realization of sadness swept across her face.

“They are?”

“Yes. They’re *very* bad people. I’m glad you called for me when you did, because otherwise you’d be chopped liver right about now!”

Lucy turned to look at her mother, her face contorting as she didn’t quite understand exactly what was happening. It wasn’t the first time that Krystal

came at her with a knife — or a frying pan, or a bowl of hot soup that later made Lucy very ill. Lucy always thought her mother loved her, just in another way from all of the other kids. In a way that made her … *different*. But she still didn't understand.

Lolligag walked toward Krystal, circling her slowly. "Do you want it to *always* be quiet?" she asked, peeking between her mother's legs.

The small child nodded.

"Do you want a best friend forever who can grant magical wishes and give you everything you've ever wanted?"

Lucy smiled. "Yes!"

"Make a wish."

"Any wish?"

"Any wish!"

Lucy shut her eyes and thought hard. Suddenly, it hit her. She knew what she wanted at this moment.

With a flick of her wrist, Lolligag waved the lollipop through the air and *POOF*! Appearing right before their eyes were a tray of confetti cupcakes with cotton candy flavored icing.

"Wow!" shouted Lucy, lunging forward and picking one up immediately. "How did you do that?!"

Lolligag smiled, her cartoon teeth stretching across her face. "I told you, kiddo! Magic!"

"What else can you do?" she asked.

Lolligag bounced around the room with a *boing* each time her black shoes left the floor. "Anything I want!"

"Can you give me one trillion dollars?" asked Lucy.

Lolligag flicked her wrist once more and a loud bang could be heard crashing in Lucy's bedroom. They both smiled at each other. "Consider it done!"

"Wow! You really *are* Lolligag!"

The cartoon character danced around the living room, in between the mother's legs, up and over the kitchen table, before swinging from the ceiling fan and landing with a thud directly in front of the girl.

"But Lucy…"

"Yes?"

Lolligag's frown turned upside down.

"I am gonna need your help first, before I can grant any more wishes."

“Of course!” she replied, jumping gleefully. “Anything for you, Lolligag!”

The cartoon smiled, once more. “Good. Because we have some puzzle pieces to collect if I’m to stay with you forever.”

Lucy nodded. “Got it. What kind of puzzle pieces?” she asked.

A grin eased its way across Lolligag’s face. “The human kind.”

Chapter Two

The two stood in front of Krystal, taking in the sight before them. Lucy always thought her mother was beautiful, with her kind eyes and soft skin. Lolligag watched Lucy for a moment, following her gaze as she trailed her fingers down her mother's arms.

"What puzzle pieces are you gonna need?" asked Lucy.

"Well, first, we need to build the body for me. We should start with the skin."

Lucy nodded, finally understanding. "Do you want my mom's?" she asked. "Her skin is soft and it always smells like coconut."

"I *love* coconut!" said Lolligag.

"But…" Lucy paused. "But how do we get it off?"

"I have an idea," stated the cartoon, smiling once more. She flicked the lollipop through the air and suddenly, the world sprang to life. The air, which had been thick and silent, was instantly filled with a sudden, deafening sound.

Krystal lunged forward with the knife as it plunged into the broken television set, the metal clinking between the cracked broken glass and deep into the electrical currents. Krystal immediately felt the sizzle coursing through her body as she began convulsing.

The sound was a horrifying BZZZZT, a violent, sputtering sound like wet wires frying. The butcher knife, held firmly in Krystal's grip, glowing

briefly as blue and white lights illuminated the terror in her eyes.

A thick, acrid smell of burnt hair filled the air. Krystal's body seized up, her limbs locking stiffly. Her frozen scream was trapped in her throat, coming out instead as a muffled, guttural rattle. Her hair stood straight up as if defying gravity while smoke began to curl off her clothes.

The convulsions intensified, turning her body into a vibrating ragdoll. She thrashed against the floor, but the knife remained wedged deep in the television's guts. The putrid smell of shit filled the air while Lucy noticed a river of brown liquid flowing from the britches of her mother. The constant thrashing caused the feces to sling about the room as if a science experiment had exploded.

Krystal's eyes finally rolled back into her head, and a sickening crackle sounded before her body went limp with the light fading from the knife.

The living room was eerily silent once more, save for the faint, continued crackle from the ruptured T.V. Krystal lay flat on the floor, completely still, her butcher knife arm stretched out and fused to the shattered screen.

Jason stood by in complete shock, unmoving, as he watched his wife succumb to her untimely electrocution.

"Lucy!" he yelled from the dining room table.

She looked up at Jason who was standing wide-eyed. He rubbed his face quickly before taking another gawk at the scene before him. His dead wife, his unamused daughter, and … a cartoon figure?

"Dad!" she shouted back, but Lolligag flicked her wrist once more. The skin over Jason's mouth connected tissues and sealed his hole up before he slammed down onto the dining room chair, unable to move or scream.

"Sorry, kiddo! Can't have Dad interrupting."

Lucy nodded. She understood that what was happening wasn't normal, and grown-ups simply wouldn't understand. She stepped forward and attempted to pull the knife from the T.V. screen, but it wouldn't budge. She looked down at it as it glistened in the yellowed overhead lamp. Lucy wondered, for a split second, what would have happened to her if Lolligag wouldn't have appeared when she did.

"Golly!" chirped Lolligag. "We don't need that silly old thing! This calls for something cuter!"

Lucy gave Lolligag a smile.

With the flick of her lollipop, a shower of glitter erupted, and a small, antique wooden box appeared at her feet. Lolligag opened it to reveal

dozens of brightly colored cookie cutters — a bunny rabbit, a star, a heart, and a little house.

"Oh, goody gumdrops! Time for arts and crafts!" Lolligag squeaked, completely undeterred by the smell of burnt flesh clinging to Krystal's smoking corpse. She bounced over to the body, her rubbery legs bending at impossible angles.

The cartoon character dropped to her knees and positioned herself where Krystal's left shoulder met her collarbone. "Which shape first?"

"The bunny! It looks like Lollihop!"

"Excellent choice, my little gumdrop!" Lolligag chirped. She selected the bunny cutter and, with a casual, playful motion, pressed it firmly against Krystal's smoking skin.

The sound was a sickening and wet *rip*, like tearing a seam on a freshly painted canvas. Lucy watched her mother's skin peel back in a smooth, curling sheet. It was a dull color, covered in a thin, greasy sheen — separated from the yellow and white fat atop the glistening red muscle. Lolligag worked with mechanical, cheery dedication like that of a child dissecting a frog as she hummed her own theme song to herself. It reminded Lucy of the way laffy taffy stretches and snaps, leaving a thin, sticky strand behind.

With a delighted little twist, and a soft, wet pop, Lolligag revealed a perfect, bunny-shaped piece of skin and lifted it free. It looked like a macabre sugar cookie, still steaming slightly from the electrocution, with traces of burnt hair clinging to its edges.

"A fresh bunny biscuit!" Lolligag said, not looking up.

Lolligag began pressing more shapes all over Krystal's body. Stars on her cheeks, hearts on her breasts, the house on her limbs. The remaining flesh beneath looked like a raw, red canvas.

The smell of copper was overwhelming as it mixed with the existing aroma of feces and burnt skin. Lolligag's eyes were wide and focused, her expression like a child on Christmas morning. Lucy's new friend was dismantling her mother as if Krystal were a toy meant to be opened, and Lolligag was simply replacing the batteries.

"Oh, yum, yum! Look at all the pretty colors, Lucy-bell!" shouted Lolligag, her voice a high-pitched, echoing squeak.

Jason tried to thrash in the chair, but to no avail.

"What do we do with the skin?" asked Lucy.

Lolligag waved her lollipop and with a dilly-daddly-doo — *POOF!* — a purple cloud of glitter and smoke erupted and revealed a blue, large, round, device that resembled a front-loading washing machine. Lolligag opened the door and tossed the skin inside. “This is my magical Dillywop machine! It’s what’s gonna turn me into a human!”

“Neat!” said Lucy, picking purple glitter off her nose. “Can we play with Daddy next?”

Lolligag smiled from ear to ear. “You betcha!”

Chapter Three

Jason stared, wide-eyed at the two. He couldn't believe what he was seeing. One moment, his wife was about to kill their daughter, and the next, she was diced up into terrifyingly cute cookies, her skin tossed into a magical washing machine, and a cartoon holding a lollipop sealed his lips together so he couldn't speak. *What the fuck is happening*, he tried to say behind the thin layer of flesh, but it came out in a muffled cry.

"Don't worry, Daddy," said Lucy as the two made their way over to him. He tried to move, but the magic was weighing him down. "This will be over soon!"

Lolligag's eyes moved up and down Jason as she thought about which part of him she'd like to take. Bouncing with giddy anticipation, her rubbery limbs stretched as she moved around the room.

"What next?" asked Lucy.

"Is your daddy big and strong?"

"Yes!"

Jason's eyes darted back and forth between the two.

"Great! I think I'll take his muscles and bones." Lolligag held out her lollipop and twirled it like a baton. "Daddy needs to contribute to the cause, too, sweet pea!"

With another flick of the lollipop, a swirl of purple glitter and pink smoke erupted in front of Jason. As it cleared, a bizarre contraption materialized

with a high pitch whizzing sound. It was a giant peppermint buzzsaw.

"Woah, cool!" shouted Lucy.

"Isn't it just neat-o, kiddo?!" remarked Lolligag with her hands on her cartoon hips. The blade was made entirely of swirling red and white stripes of hard candy. Its edges serrated into countless tiny, razor-sharp teeth, each one glistening like a crystallized sweet tooth. A brass handle, cartoonishly oversized, jutted from its center allowing Lolligag a firm grip.

As it spun, the buzzsaw emitted a faint, high-pitched hum, and tiny flecks of peppermint dust began to scatter in the air. The scent was nauseatingly sweet, mixing with the lingering smells of the leftovers of Krystal.

"Alright, Daddy-o!" Lolligag chirped. "Time for your contribution! Everyone needs a helping hand!"

Jason's eyes, already wide with terror, now bulged in silent, unadulterated horror as the spinning, candy-striped blade grew closer. He tried to move, to thrash, to inch away, but he was bound by an invisible force. Muffled roars vibrated from his sealed mouth as the veins in his neck bulged outward. The sweetness in the air was suffocating.

Lolligag hummed her theme song, a cheerful nonsensical tune, as she aimed the buzzsaw. With a casual, slightly playful push, she brought the spinning blade down onto Jason's arm just above the elbow.

Jason's world imploded.

The first sensation was an unimaginable cold, razor-sharp and searing pain followed immediately by a deafening grind that vibrated through his entire body — the sound of a thousand candy canes pushing against skin and bone, as his flesh was torn apart. He felt the teeth, each one a tiny, peppermint-striped razorblade chewing through his skin.

Then, a wave of white-hot agony exploded from his arm, rushing up his shoulder and straight into his brain overwhelming every other sense. Jason's body bucked against the invisible restraints, his muscles screaming, forced to endure every excruciating second. His eyes were wide, fixed on the absurd, cheerful cartoon, which was now splattered with a thick, cherry-red syrup that smelled like melted pennies mixing with the overpowering sweetness of the peppermint.

The blade sank deeper.

He felt the fibrous muscle give way with a squelching, pulpy sound. Then came the bone. The buzzsaw couldn't cleanly slice through it. It pulverized it instead with a *snap, crackle,* and a *pop*. He could almost feel the jagged

shards of bone, the marrow, his very life, being turned into a fine, bloody powder.

Cherry-red blood frothed and bubbled tiny pink bubbles, oozing and coating the spinning blade in a stick glaze.

His arm, still attached by a stubborn thread of sinew and skin, twisted as Lolligag gave it a final tug. The connection snapped with a wet and rubbery *thwack*.

A gaping and ragged stump were left glistening red and white with candy cane dust mixed in. The pain was so immense and all-consuming that for a moment, Jason's mind mercifully fractured. His vision blurred with Lolligag swirling into a kaleidoscope of colors.

She held up the detached limb triumphantly, the peppermint buzzsaw still barely spinning as she dropped it to the floor. "Look, Lucy-Goosey! A whole candy apple arm. Freshly picked!"

Lolligag turned and skipped to the Dillywop machine and, with a *PLOP*, tossed the arm directly into the mouth of it.

Lucy felt like she was going to be sick. Watching Jason writhe in agony, his body convulsing and his eyes rolling back into his head, he now sat with a stump, gushing bloody syrup onto the dining room floor.

"I—I think—" Lucy tried to get out, but before she could say anything further, she began spewing remnants of Vienna sausages all over the bloody peppermint mixture.

"Ah! Goodness, gumdrops!" squeaked Lolligag., hopping backward to avoid the mess landing on her perfectly pristine shoes. She looked at the puddle of steaming bile with a frown. "You okay there, honey buns?"

Lucy's small body clenched as the acidic tide rolled up her throat with each passing wave of nausea. "Bleghhh," she croaked out as more followed suit. "I — I think I'll be okay."

Lolligag patted her on the back. "Good! Because we certainly have a lot more work to do."

"What about Dad?" asked Lucy, wiping the remnants of the vomit from her lip. "He's really hurt," she said.

"Oh, no worries! Let me fix that."

With a cheerful skip and a bounce, her rubbery legs making a soft *boing* sound against the rug, Lolligag retrieved the butcher knife from where it lay next to Krystal's remains. She zipped over to the bound Jason, stopping his silent thrashing with a single, quick motion.

The cartoon casually drew the knife across his throat like scoring a piece of cake. Jason's wide, desperate eyes darted to Lucy, and for a fleeting, agonizing second, they locked in on his daughter as life slowly drained away from him. Blood immediately began to pour from the line on his neck, pooling down his chest and staining the peppermint dusted floor.

"Daddy!" yelled Lucy, stepping forward. Her eyes suddenly filled with tears. "But I loved Daddy. We couldn't save him?"

Lolligag's smile faded quickly.

"No, pumpkin. We couldn't. Your dad was a *bad* man."

"He was?"

"Yes. He's on a bad list and everything."

Lucy began to cry. "I heard Mom always talking about a bad list he was on, but they never said what it meant."

"Tell you what, little gumdrop. Let's go find a heart and brain next, and I'll show you just how bad Jason was. Deal?"

"Deal."

Chapter Four

"Doesn't a doctor live in this neighborhood? I heard your parents talking about it once."

Lucy nodded. "Dr. Crowley. I see him sometimes."

Lolligag paused. "Oh?"

"Yeah. He's a doctor for kids."

"Do you remember where he lives?"

Lucy nodded.

With a flick of the magical lollipop, the Dillywop machine floated in the air and folded itself into a tiny contraption that Lolligag picked up and slipped into the hem of her sock.

Then, she used the magical lollipop to draw a cartoon door that the two walked through, appearing on the other side in the bushes that lined the back of Dr. Crowley's house.

"Is this the one?" asked Lolligag.

"Yep!"

A small, whimpering sound could be heard coming from a shed.

"Wait, do you hear that?" asked Lolligag.

"Yeah! What is it?"

The two followed the sound, tiptoeing across the yard. The shed had an open lock on the outside. Lolligag pulled it off the handle and tossed it in the yard before opening the door.

The room was full of tools and a trunk that had been moved to the side. Beneath it was what resembled a trapdoor. The two girls looked at each other and shrugged before the cartoon swished her lollipop and the door swung upwards, opening itself to a set of stairs.

The whimpering got louder.

"Should we go down?" whispered Lucy.

"Yes, but let's be super-duper extra quiet, okay, kiddo?"

Lucy nodded before they began making the steep decline down the steps when they heard what sounded like a conversation coming from the dark.

Please, Dr. Crowley. I'm ready to go home now.

They kept going, down the corridor and around a corner.

I'm almost done! shouted a man's voice.

"That's Dr. Crowley's voice," whispered Lucy.

The walls were lined in photos of children wearing different outfits. Some were princesses, some were laying on what appeared to be medical tables… when one photo caught Lolligag's eye.

"Hey, gumdrop," she whispered, "is that you when you were little-er?"

Lucy looked at it closer and she immediately recognized the Styrofoam alphabet letters clinging to the wall above her head in a bathtub. She knew it was her, but she must've been half her age.

The two frowned and looked at each other.

"See," said Lolligag. "Told you your dad was a *bad man*."

When they reached the bottom of the stairs, they peeked around the corner and saw Dr. Crowley bent over a camera.

"Well, well, well," shouted Lolligag.

The man immediately turned around. A frightened little girl ran to the corner of the room and covered herself with a blanket.

"What the fuck!" he shouted, seeing the cartoon character before him.

"I'll say!" said Lolligag, before she flicked her lollipop. The clothes melted off the doctor's body as he was immediately thrown to the bed and tied down with invisible ropes.

"What the fuck!" he yelled once more.

Meanwhile, Lucy approached the young girl. "Why are you here?" she asked.

"My daddy wanted me to have a doctor appointment today," the girl cried.

“Go home,” she whispered. The girl grabbed her clothes and ran up the stairs, her tiny feet pitter-pattering up the steps before disappearing completely.

Lolligag stood over the man. “Tsk tsk tsk,” she said, shaking her head.

Fear consumed his face.

“You’re sick in the head,” she said.

“I never fucking touched anyone!” he shouted.

Lolligag’s smile disappeared. “Well, good thing I’m not here for your hands, then.”

“What are you?!” he shouted again.

“I’m your worst nightmare, Dr. Crowley,” said Lolligag, an unsettling cartoon smile creeping across her face. “And I’m here to give your heart a new home.”

Confusion settled in his furrowed brow as the cartoon loomed over his naked body.

Lucy was still in the corner of the room refusing to look at her pediatrician.

“Lucy Boo! What kind of contraption do you think I should use to remove this man’s heart?” she asked.

“My *what?!*”

Lucy thought for a moment. “I like the claw machines at the arcade. Daddy used to always get me little stuffies from the inside of them when we’d go for pizza.”

“Done.” With a flick of her wrist, the lollipop swished through the air and … *POOF*! Above the man appeared a grappling claw.

He began to scream and thrash against the invisible ropes.

Lolligag walked over to the camera and hit the record button. “We’ll wanna get this one on video!” she said.

Lolligag held the magical lollipop over Dr. Crowley’s chest, his terrified screams muffled by the hand Lolligag placed over his mouth.

“Don’t worry, sweet pea, this part’s just a little slice!” she chirped.

The lollipop made a high-pitched, almost musical *ZIIIIIIP* as the tip traced a line down the center of his chest, essentially unzipping his skin. It peeled back instantly and flawlessly, like the tight wrapper coming off a stick of hard caramel. His ribs, glistening white and rigid, were completely exposed. Lolligag then plunged both gloved hands into the incision and

pulled the ribcage apart with a crunch. The cavity inside was an unholy sight of wet organs.

The heart, a deep, solid red, pumped frantically at the center, looking like a large, beating red velvet truffle set in a nest of pink, spongy marshmallow puff lungs.

"There's the prize, cupcake!"

A sudden mechanical *CLUNK* sounded at the foot of the bed. The lollipop had conjured a brightly colored arcade pedestal, miniature in size, with a single joystick that looked like a giant swirled gumball, with a large red button on the side.

Above Dr. Crowley, the grappling claw lowered on a chain.

"You go first, gummy bear. Use the joystick and try to get the heart. Three tries only, just like the arcade!"

The heart was visible and beating furiously. Dr. Crowley was now silent, the sheer, unimaginable agony of having his chest opened rendering him temporarily mute. He could only stare down into his own body.

Lucy, forgetting her previous nausea, gripped the gumball joystick with both hands, her tongue sticking out in concentration. "Okay!"

She pushed the stick forward, and the claw whirred down, coming to life. She misjudged the depth as it rammed into his stomach sending a jolt of debilitating pain through the doctor's body.

"Ahhh, sweet pea! You missed it!" Lolligag shrieked with delight, clapping her hands. "Too low, too low!"

Dr. Crowley let out a long, desperate, wail. Lucy giggled as she pulled the claw back up and tried again.

The claw plunged back down, its three metal fingers snapping shut. They missed the heart again, instead grabbing the loops of his intestines, which stretched and snapped with a wet *glump*!

"Oh, you got the taffy!" shouted Lolligag, doubled over in laughter.

Lucy hit the button and the claw dropped the sticky mess back into the cavity.

Dr. Crowley choked while blood made its way up his throat.

"Last chance, LuLu! Get the truffle!" she urged.

Lucy focused, lining the claw up perfectly with the rapidly beating heart. She slammed the stick down and hit the red button. This time, the claw locked on. It bit deep into the heart muscle, the squelching fibrous tissue breaking away as the pulled the organ upward.

The sound was sickening. A thick, visceral *thwop*, and a long wet tear as the coronary arteries and veins snapped free like red licorice.

The claw lifted the violently beating heart, dripping the thick, red syrup, and dropped it into Lolligag's outstretched pink gloves.

"Score!" she yelled, holding the heart above her head.

With his chest empty, the man's terrified eyes went instantly vacant, his body giving one final shuddering spasm before collapsing completely still against the invisible ropes.

Lolligag retrieved the Dillywop machine from her sock and threw it across the room where it sprang to full size. She opened the door and tossed the heart inside before swiping her hands and placing them on her hips.

"Now what?" asked Lucy.

"Now let's go pay your mom's friend a visit, because all we need left is a brain!"

Chapter Five

Lolligag pointed the magical lollipop at the dark, cluttered corner of the basement. The walls shimmered, and a door, painted in bright yellow with a spinning candy swirl at its center, instantly materialized.

The two girls stepped through the magical portal.

They tumbled out of the swirling tunnel and onto a cracked concrete driveway. With a *thworp*, the door quickly disappeared.

Before them stood a rundown squat house. Its windows were dirty and covered in heavy blinds. A single, rusted pickup truck sat on blocks in the yard. The air was different here. It smelled like stale cigarettes, old pizza, and something chemical.

"Rustic!" shouted Lolligag. "A regular bad guy lair!"

Lucy pointed to the front door which was painted a chocolate chip brown. "Mouth never lets anyone walk in. He has a chain lock and a peephole." She pointed further up. "He also has those." Above the entrance was a small security camera with a red, blinking light.

Lolligag grinned a wide and unsettling cartoon smile. "Locks are for boring, normal people, Lu-lu Lemondrop! For us, they're just part of decoration!"

She skipped up to the door and, using the tip of her lollipop like a piece of chalk and traced a perfect, round circle around the peephole. With a tiny *ding*, the circle popped out of the wood, revealing a hole.

Lowering her voice, she began to whisper “He’s home! And he’s asleep on the sofa!”

“Lolligag, I don’t know if this is the best idea,” she said, her eyes full of fear. She recalled the time that Krystal stormed in unannounced and then she couldn’t walk for a week.

Lolligag held the girl's face between her two pink gloves. “Don’t worry. I’ll protect you, muffin. Let’s go get this brain!”

Reaching through the hole in the door, she unlocked it and watched it slowly creak open. “Watch this,” she whispered once more.

With her arms stretched out in front of her, Lolligag wobbled her legs and let her eyes go different ways before letting out a zombified “Braaaaaaaains!”

The man on the couch shot up from his slumber. With his eyes on the zombie cartoon coming toward him, Mouth jumped to his feet. “What the fuck is going on!”

He scrambled backward, tripping over a mound of dirty clothes. The flickering blue-white light of the television illuminated his face, which was hollow and covered in a week’s stubble. He stared at the impossible sight before him before glancing at the little girl. “You!” he shouted.

Lucy hid behind her cartoon friend and tucked her chin under. She feared Mouth. Most people did. She thought he was a mean man who gave Krystal little bags that made her mean, too.

“What’s going on! Who are you!” mimicked Lolligag. “You humans are so full of fun, little questions!” She walked toward Mouth as he slowly crawled backward. “Well, *Mouth*,” she whispered. “I’m a friend of a friend and you’re the grand finale in our mission!”

Lolligag flicked the magic wand and suddenly the room had cleared. With purple, swirling smoke appeared a large, brightly colored plastic cylinder attached to a plunger handle — it was an oversized Play-Doh Ice Cream Machine!

Mouth jumped up and attempted to run, but laffy taffy magically sprang from the broken linoleum floor and caught him quickly as it wrapped around his entire body. Lolligag watched as the taffy pulled him to the end of the Play-Doh machine.

“Now, comes the fun part!” She brought the extruder down and, using her magical strength, forcefully screwed the open end of the cylinder directly onto the crown of Mouth’s head.

The man started to scream and kick his legs.

Lolligag turned the crank and it began to swirl tiny blades on the inside, piercing through Mouth's skin in a circular motion. Blood dripped out of the cup and onto the floor as he continued to scream. The blades forced their way, grinding against the man's skull while it began cutting through him. A faint, desperate gurgle was all Mouth could make out.

The sound was horrific. Mechanical whizzes that rose above his choked screams. It was the sound of cheap plastic and sharp metal furiously chewing through bone. Thick, dark, arterial syrup immediately began to weep out from the edges of the extruder's cylinder, pooling onto the dirty floor with a *plink, plink, plink*.

The tiny blades fought a desperate war against the human skull. He could feel the vibration resonating deep inside his molars and jawbone, a searing and relentless pressure building as the cylinder locked onto his cranium, pulverizing Mouth's skull into bone dust.

With a final, agonizing *squelch*, and a loud, brittle *crack*, the blades finished their rotation, severing the last connective tissue and completing the circle. The cylindrical top of his skull, now a cap, was held firmly inside the extruder's chamber.

Deprived of its protection, the remaining brain tissue was fully exposed to the elements and relentless machine.

He was alive, awake, and experiencing the unimaginable pressure building as Lolligag prepared to push the plunger down onto his brain. Mouth's attempt at a scream was reduced to another single, wet gurgle.

"What flavor?" asked Lolligag.

Lucy smiled. "Strawberry!"

Lolligag replaced the circular end of the Play-Doh device with a star shape and pressed it against the man's skull with a cheerful *clack*. She began to crank the oversized handle once more, while the sound of gurgling mush made its way through the entire toy.

At the end sat a large waffle cone, and finally, out came a substance — pulverized brain matter with glistening pink strands in the shape of strawberry star noodles. They slowly oozed out and into the waffle cone.

With a final slurp, the brain was out. The opening left behind in it was an empty, ragged socket filled with bubbling, crimson fluid.

Lolligag retrieved the Dillywop machine from her sock, tossing it in the air as it formed magically into its full size. She picked up the ice cream

cone. “Mmmm! Strawberry sorbet!” she chirped, gesturing to Lucy, but the little girl giggled and crinkled her nose.

With a *thunk*, Lolligag tossed the brain matter cone into the Dillywop machine and shut the door.

“Let’s get home and turn me into a human!” she shouted with glee.

Chapter Six

Lolligag and Lucy reappeared in the center of the living room. Everything was exactly as they had left it. The room was a gallery of gore. Krystal's skinless corpse, fused by the knife to the cracked T.V. screen; Jason's three-limbed body slumped in the chair. Shit and blood covered the floor and splattered the walls.

The Dillywop machine stood next to them pulsing with a dull, purple light. A satisfying *whirrr* purred from its core signaling that the collection was complete. Skin, bones, muscles, heart, and brain.

Lolligag clapped her pink gloves together and skipped over to the machine, patting its side affectionately. "All the ingredients are in! Fresh and ready for the baking cycle!"

Lucy stared at her new friend blankly. "What if it doesn't work?"

"It will! Don't you worry your tart little heart, cupcake! It certainly will!"

Lolligag opened the machine and climbed inside, shutting the door behind her. The clear circle at the front revealed everything inside as Lolligag waved a simple goodbye. Her voice echoed through the machine — "See you on the cooked side!"

With a dramatic, drawn-out flourish, she pressed the button on the lollipop stick that was shaped like a tiny, perfect pink star.

A loud, electronic jingle resembling a slot machine hitting the jackpot erupted from the Dillywop. The purple light intensified, becoming

blindingly bright, casting shadows across the flayed bodies of her parents. It began to rock and spin — faster and faster, emitting a high-pitched *kachunka-chunka-chunka* that vibrated through the floorboards.

Lolligag's voice could be heard spinning from the inside. "Stand back, squeeze-cheese!"

Lucy moved backward and across the room. She had never believed in magic before today, yet here she was standing before a Dillywop waiting on Lolligag to turn into a human with all the pieces of people they had collected. It was absurd, she thought to herself.

The cylinder flashed one last time followed by a sound like a pressurized soda can exploding.

The front door of the Dillywop machine flew off and crashed into the wall. A thick, billowing cloud of steaming, shimmering cotton candy vapor burst out, filling the entire living room in its sweet fluff.

Through the swirling, pink haze, Lucy could make out a shifting form rising from the machine. The vapor began to dissipate, a shadow growing into something taller, darker, and impossibly fleshy where the cartoon had stood.

The sound of the machine died completely, replaced by a single, wet slop as the new form stepped onto the living room rug.

The vapor cleared, and the new Lolligag stood before Lucy — human-sized and structurally correct, yet terrifyingly wrong.

Her body was pale, stretched smooth in some places like a latex suit, but the seams were still visible. Lines of pink, fibrous scar tissue in the shape of bunnies and hearts and stars where Krystal's skin had been pulled and joined. The skin itself shimmered with a greasy sheen that smelled faintly of coconut. Her torso was rigid, hinting at Jason's strong muscle and bone structure, with the lollipop wand jutting out from a piece of exposed rib. Where her neck met her shoulders, thick and glossy red tendons pulsed from the heart that beat inside her flesh, obviously in the wrong spot.

Her once cartoon face was gone and now existed in its place was a round brain with oversized human eyes, unnaturally wideset, staring directly into Lucy's face. They were realistic, yet unblinking, and fixed with a cold clarity lacking in empathy.

The new Lolligag smiled a slow smile that stretched the brain matter skin too far across her skull.

In a low, nearly seductive alto voice that reverberated off the walls, Lolligag managed to croak out "How do I look, Lucy?!"

But Lucy couldn't move. Frozen in fear, she opened her mouth to speak, but all that came out was a small crackle. "Euh —"

Lolligag turned toward a mirror that hung over the sofa table. Seeing herself for the first time, her smile seemed to fade. With only one arm hanging from the center of her smooth chest, she lifted her hand and twirled the tiny piece of teal hair that sprouted from the top of her brainhead. "I'm…" she whispered. "I'm perfect."

Lolligag turned to Lucy to find the little girl painted in a frozen look of fear. "What do you think?" she said, her voice now that of a grown man.

Lucy tried to find the words, but all she could muster out was "I'm ready for my third wish, now."

Lolligag skipped toward her and, with a *squish*, pulled out the lollipop that was embedded into her ribs, sending a dribble of blood down onto the floor.

Lucy stared at her fleshy monster friend. She looked past Lolligag to the static-filled, shattered television screen-hole where a simple, rubbery cartoon used to dance.

The quiet she had wanted was here, but it was all wrong. So, so incredibly wrong.

The realization hit Lucy with a saddening force as tears welled up in her eyes. "I — I wish …." Lucy whispered, her voice trembling. "I wish you could go back inside the television where you belong."

The perfect, wide smile on Lolligag's face didn't falter, but widened into sadness.

"Oh, Lucy Goosey," she said. "Are you sure you really wanna do that to me?" Lolligag stepped toward the little girl.

Lucy nodded, moving backward.

"You're absolutely, positively sure?"

Lucy stepped back once more. "Yes," she said shyly. "I'm sorry, Lolligag. This world isn't meant for you."

With that, Lolligag paused and waved the lollipop one last time. "Very well," she said. She turned toward the television and stepped toward the screen. Her foot, which was a singular knob of flesh with no toes, lifted and crossed the threshold, but it didn't go in. Instead, it stretched and distorted,

the bone grinding and shrinking as it was forcefully pulled into a technicolor swirling vortex.

Like flesh being squeezed through a straw, the sound of wet suction filled the room. Lolligag let out a long, silent gasp as the energy of the television began to consume her completely as her body was being disassembled.

The flesh of her leg pulled taut, separating from the rest of her body with an elastic rip. Then came the rest of her. Smooth skin wrinkling and bunching and stretching as the tiny, broken screen struggled to suck in the whole human-sized monster. She shrunk, flattened, and broke through the glass.

The last thing to remain outside the screen was Lolligag's unblinking brainface, trapped halfway through the glass. Her wide eyes were fixed on Lucy, a reflection of a silent rage.

With a final *pop*, the last piece of her face disappeared and silence overtook the room.

The television screen made a slight buzzing sound before going completely black.

With a sudden *poof*, the Dillywop machine was gone.

The only things left were the bodies of the parents, the gore, and the deep, abiding quiet.

Lucy was alone, sitting on the rug next to the evidence of her terrible wish as she ate a cupcake that Lolligag had conjured this morning. The chaos had stopped forever, the quiet was deafening, but she suddenly remembered that her second wish was still sitting in her bedroom. As she stood to walk away, a muffled, electronic song began to play from the broken speakers of the T.V.

"Lolligag, Lolligag, with her magic lollipop.
A sugar-sweet adventure that will surely never stop!
She lives in Sherbetville, where every day is neat.
Solving wacky crimes and granting little treats!
Lolligag, Lolligag, with the touch of her magic hand,
The friendliest, the sweetest, the best in all the land!"

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Thrice the Madness
Eight Cases of Jane
The Dollhouse Collection
Dollface, Puppet, and Dolly & Pip
Vasectomy
Feeler Deep
Baby Bones
Anthologies:
Rotten Requiems — An Extreme Metal Horror Anthology
Moods and Megrims —A Collection of Hysterical Women